



## Iowa Public Health Association

– The voice of public health in Iowa

# ADVANCE HEALTH IN ALL POLICIES

### The Issue:

The health of Iowans contributes to a robust economy and the livability of our state. The *Health In All Policies (HiAP)* approach to decision-making aims to improve the efficiency and cost-effectiveness of legislative actions in balance with the health of Iowans. We must make wise policy and financial investments that value the health of Iowans in order for Iowa to truly become the “healthiest state in the nation.” Our greatest health challenges and solutions are highly complex and extend beyond the doctor’s office. The social, physical, and economic environments in which Iowans live, work, learn and play significantly impact their health. Therefore, improving the health of Iowans requires collaboration with experts in housing, transportation, education, water and air quality, criminal justice and employment.

HiAP identifies how decisions in multiple sectors or policy areas affect health, and how better health can, in turn, support the goals of these sectors. It engages diverse governmental partners and stakeholders to work together to promote health and simultaneously advance other goals such as promoting job creation and economic stability, transportation access and mobility, a strong agricultural system, and educational attainment.

A key component that supports HiAP is the Health Impact Assessment (HIA). HIA is a data-driven process that supports lawmakers to proactively enhance the positive impacts of policy decisions and mitigate the negative, well before health consequences are felt by Iowans and additional tax dollars are required to make corrections after implementation. HIAs have demonstrated cost-savings and improved health outcomes in a variety of issue areas, ranging from land use, housing and transportation projects to labor, education and economic policies. Iowa is one of only seven states nationally that has not conducted a single HIA to improve decision-making. Minnesota has conducted 34 HIAs, the majority informing built environment and transportation decisions with additional HIAs in the natural resources, education and social justice sectors. Kansas has leveraged HIAs to consider issues from the potential health effects of casinos to expanding liquor licenses to changes in corporate farming law.

Iowa Public Health Association (IPHA) has been working to cultivate the concept of HiAP here in Iowa through policy position statements, educational webinars and dissemination of HiAP resources. Public health agencies across the state are working with non-health partners to increase the walkability and bikeability of their communities. Some are increasing access to physical activity by establishing community-use agreements, which open schools’ gyms and fields to the community. HiAP approaches to local planning and zoning are increasing Iowans’ access to affordable, healthy foods by allowing for urban agriculture and community gardens. IPHA seeks statewide endorsement and opportunities for public health and other governmental entities to identify and leverage non-traditional partners across sectors and within the business community to advance this new thinking.

### Policy Solutions:

- Convene a new or existing work group representing statewide interests comprised of citizens, businesses, public health representatives and other stakeholders to develop a Health in All Policies (HiAP) plan for Iowa.
- Create a pilot project to test Health Impact Assessment (HIA) as a tool within the Legislative Services Agency (LSA) to analyze the health impact of proposed legislation similar to the fiscal and legal analysis LSA provides.

